

AADI- SAARTHAK

Tips for Looking after yourself

Supporting people can be stressful!

Caring for a person with disability can affect you emotionally. It is a difficult balance between your needs and the needs of the person you are supporting. Acknowledging your emotions and needs will help you successfully cope with the person's problems as well as your own.

Some of the emotions that you experience may be grief, guilt, anger, embarrassment, loneliness, detachment and possibly others.

Grief

Sometimes the person you are supporting may be experiencing a sense of loss. Your client may be sad. You may remember your own experiences of loss when you witness another person coping with their sense of loss. You may also find yourself immersed in the way that person and their family are feeling. You may not have space or the opportunity to address your own feelings of loss. It is important to try and separate your own experiences from those of your client's. You do need to address your feelings of your loss with your friends or your family. Sometimes it may be helpful to talk to someone in your supporting organization.

Guilt

It is common to feel guilty for being embarrassed or angry about the person you support's behaviour, for anger at the person, or for feeling that you can not carry on in the role of the caregiver. You may find it helpful to talk to other caregivers and friends about the feelings

Anger

Sometimes you may be angry. Your anger may be mixed. It may be directed at the person, yourself, the family or the situations that you face. It is important to distinguish between your anger because you have to do too many things at the same time or the nature of the work that you have to do. You may be angry about the way you are being treated. You may angry about being blamed for things that you have not done. Your anger is your emotion, no one can challenge it. You need to cope with it. When you are angry take a moment to calm down.

Talk to yourself.

Remind yourself that you can tell people about your anger but you cannot overlook your responsibility in anger.

You cannot threaten people in anger.

You cannot hurt people in anger.

You cannot neglect people in anger.

It is useful to express how you are feeling calmly by stating in words what makes you angry.

Sometimes when the situation is beyond your control or when you feel you are angry repeatedly it may help to seek advice from friends, family, and or your supporting organization.

Embarrassment

You may feel embarrassed when the person displays inappropriate behaviour in public. The embarrassment may fade if you remind yourself that this behaviour is not done to embarrass you. Tell yourself that all people have their own way of expressing themselves; this present behaviour is just one variation of human beings express themselves.

Sometimes the person may not know how their behaviour is affecting others. It is alright. It is not the end of the world it is only a misunderstanding. You can share your feelings with family members, they may guide you how to respond to such situations.

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In your embarrassment do not tell strangers about information regarding the person you are supporting. Do not blame the person. Do not use unhelpful labels to explain the person's behaviour.

If you continue to be embarrassed by the behaviour of person you are supporting, do seek help from the supporting organization.

Loneliness

Many caregivers get no time for themselves. This makes them withdraw from their family, friends and society. They may be confined in and around the person with disability. Being a caregiver can be lonely – you may have lost companionship with the person and lost other social contacts due to the demands of being a caregiver. Loneliness makes it hard to cope with the tasks of care giving. It is helpful to make it a priority to have some time for your personal relationships.

Caring for yourself

Share your problems

You need to share your feelings about your care giving experiences with the supporting organizations. If you keep them to yourself, it may be more difficult for you to look after the person. If you can realise that what you are experiencing is a natural response to your situation, it will be easier for you to cope. Try to accept support when it is offered by others, even if you feel you are troubling them. Try to think ahead and have someone to turn to in an emergency.

Make time for yourself

It is essential that you make time for yourself. This will allow you to spend time with others, enjoy your favourite hobbies and, most important, enjoy yourself. If you need a longer amount of time away, try to find someone (through the supporting agency) to take over the caring for you so that you can have a rest.

Know your limits

Know what you do not have skills. Trying to do things when you do not have the skills to do those is stressful. When you are always trying to work without resources then it is stressful to. Most people will come to realise how much they can take before they reach the point where the caring becomes too demanding. If your situation is too much to bear, take action by calling for help to prevent and avoid a crisis.

Accept responsibility, learn from mistakes but don't blame yourself all the time

Be aware and careful about the risks faced by the person with disability. You have to be responsible but you do not have to blame yourself or the person with disability for all the problems you encounter. Remember, the limitations faced by the person with disability are a reality. As are the barriers faced by them. There will be times when you would not be able to help the person in the way you wanted to.

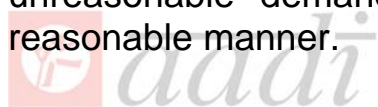
Sometimes there may be an accident. Do not trivialize the affect on the person with disability. Always question yourself as to what went wrong. What could have been done differently? Learn from each incident, ensure that it does not happen again. Do not keep on criticizing yourself and blaming yourself. If you believe in yourself then the person with disability will be a lot safer. Do not be over confident. Over confidence will lead to accidents.

Take and seek advice to increase your skills

It will help you to seek advice concerning your changing role and as the changes occur in the life circumstances and abilities person with disability. Supporting the person with disability is an ever changing job. You need to update your skills to be able to do the work that you do. It is also important to continue your training to keep becoming more effective in the support that you provide. You could have a growth in your career if you train further and add to your skills.

Family of the person with disability

For some caregivers the family of the person with disability is the greatest source of help. For others the family is the biggest source of distress. It is important to seek and accept help from other members of the family if they are available. Sharing of some tasks will help you to and not to carry the whole burden of caring on your own. If you are feeling distressed because the family members are not helping, and may even be critical because they lack understanding about your role or your skills, it may be helpful to call a family meeting with supporting organization to discuss the care of the person. Do not say yes to unreasonable demands from the family. Request for support in a reasonable manner.



Remember you are important

You are important to yourself. You are important for people you love. And you are an important person in the life of the person with disability, the person you support. You are important so it is so essential to take care of yourself.

HELP FOR CAREGIVERS IS AVAILABLE FROM

Local Supporting Organization

Peer Support for Caregivers

National Trust

Sanjeevni

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